



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
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News Release

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Well-child checks top agenda for Washington State Board of Health

March 14, 2001, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., AmeriTel Inn, 4520 Martin Way East, Olympia

OLYMPIA—At its regular meeting March 14 in Olympia, the Washington State Board of Health will consider a range of public health issues, beginning with interagency efforts to determine whether Washington's children are receiving all-important comprehensive health check-ups.

In November, the board approved a list of clinical preventive services for children from birth to age 10. The next step was to determine what proportion of our state's children are receiving the services they need to get a healthy start in life. Since data is not available from insurers and health providers, the board decided to ask some of the parents of children entering kindergarten.

In January, Secretary of Health Mary Selecky, Secretary of Social and Health Services Dennis Braddock, and Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson pledged their agencies' support for the assessment project. The Office of the Insurance Commissioner is also supporting the project and four local health jurisdictions have offered to provide support in their service areas—Public Health Seattle and King County, Jefferson County Health Department, Spokane Regional Health District, and Yakima Health District. Some agencies are interested in going further and helping parents get check-ups for their children. These efforts could include helping parents obtain health insurance coverage and finding medical providers.

"There is widespread agreement that this is extremely important work, but people have different ideas about how to approach it," said Vickie Ybarra, chair of the board's Subcommittee on Children's Health and Well Being. "The board will listen carefully to suggestions from the different agencies and then decide what role it should play in this collaboration."

The board will also discuss whether to review some of its rules that are related to children's clinical services. These rules govern prenatal screening, newborn screening, visual and auditory screening and scoliosis screening.

In other matters, the board will review recent research on the health effects of wireless telecommunication and consider whether to follow the example of the World Health Organization, Great Britain and New Zealand and issue a public health advisory. It will also hear from the Department of Ecology about its work on toxic chemicals that remaining in the environment for long periods of time and accumulate in humans and other animals that are at the top of food chain.

The agenda and background materials are on the Web at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/SBOH/>

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The State Board of Health is composed of 10 members appointed by the Governor to represent the people of the State. The Board's mission is to develop policies to promote, protect, maintain, and improve the health of Washingtonians. Visit the Board's website at www.doh.wa.gov/sboh.